

Hi my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and this is the 8<sup>th</sup> principle minute. With the adoption of the 8<sup>th</sup>

Principle, our congregation committed to dismantle racism, beginning within our walls.

Many members of our congregation have read Caste, Isabel Wilkerson's insightful examination of the American caste system. It defines the hierarchy of American social, political, and economic structures. Hierarchies, with unequal access to power, are deeply ingrained in our culture, and our congregation does mirror the broader society.

As part of our work to build a Beloved Community, we've been challenged to examine the hierarchical nature of our congregational structure. In some areas we are weakly hierarchical at most, in others, there is a strong, ingrained power structure. When we look at other aspects of our 8th Principle work, such as becoming a community of communities and moving from majority rule to consensus building, we can see clear goals with a well-defined path to realizing them. But when we look at our governance and administration, the hierarchy serves very practical purposes and we're going to need to find inventive and innovative means of serving those purposes in an equitable and inclusive manner. Some congregations have already begun and we can follow the path they've blazed as we decide upon a more collaborative, participatory form of governance.

Looking back to last week's sermon, we're all going to need to minister each other. It won't take a miracle, so the Mets analogy might not work out, and it won't take a super powerhouse with deep pockets, so the Yankees aren't needed; we all simply need to step up to the plate. In fact, baseball season is over, so we'll switch to football: We know we can't punt and we don't want to fumble, but there's no need for a hail mary (especially here). We do need a new playbook and then we can carry the ball across the goal line.

Together we will continue this journey toward spiritual wholeness, build a beloved community, educate ourselves and discuss what it means to develop a culture of being accountably anti-racist. We will continue to look at our own practices, identity, and stories with a new lens to dismantle the racism in ourselves and our institutions.